

Date of Hearing: April 5, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 1217 (Bocanegra) – As Amended March 28, 2017

SUBJECT: Teachers: California Teacher Corps Act of 2017: teacher residency programs.

SUMMARY: Establishes the California Teacher Corps program to provide \$60 million in one-time Proposition 98 funding for matching grants to local school districts to create or expand teacher residency programs in which the funds can be used to pay for master teacher stipends, stipends for residents, and costs of mentoring and induction. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the California Teacher Corps Act of 2017.
- 2) Makes various findings and declarations about the importance of developing programs that increase the probability that teacher recruits will succeed and stay in the profession and stay where they are most needed.
- 3) Defines the following terms:
 - a) Experienced mentor teacher: teacher who meets specified requirements, including at least three years of teaching experience and a clear teaching credential in the field in which he or she will be mentoring, has taught in a hard to staff school, has a record of successful teaching, receives specific training for the mentor teacher role, engages in ongoing professional learning and networking with other mentors, and receives compensation or appropriate release time, or both, to serve as a mentor.
 - b) Local educational agency (LEA): includes but is not limited to a school district, county office of education, charter school, or charter management organization.
 - c) Teacher residency program: a school-based teacher preparation program that is accredited by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and in which a prospective teacher meets specified conditions, including:
 - i) Teaches at least one-half time alongside a teacher of record, who is designated as the mentor teacher, for at least one full academic year while engaging in initial preparation coursework.
 - ii) Receives instruction in specified areas, including the teaching of the content area in which the teacher will become certified to teach and the management of the classroom environment.
 - iii) Receives financial assistance that provides a stipend.
 - iv) Receives mentoring and induction support following the completion of the initial credential program necessary to obtain a clear credential and ongoing professional development and networking opportunities during his or her first years of teaching.

- 4) Specifies that a teacher residency program meet the following conditions, among others:
 - a) Seeks out individuals who meet the Teaching Performing Expectations of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and meet hiring needs of the LEA for difficult-to-fill-areas, such as chronic teacher shortage areas, including special education, math, science and bilingual teachers, and hard-to-staff schools. Produces culturally responsive teachers who address specific student populations, local district initiatives and priorities, and teacher preparation emphasis while maintaining high state-established standards for credentials.
 - b) Allows residents to learn to teach in the same LEA, in which they will work, learning the instructional initiatives and curriculum of the LEA.
 - c) Groups teacher candidates in cohorts to facilitate professional collaboration among residents, and places them in teaching schools or professional development programs that are organized to support a high-quality teacher learning experience in a supportive work environment.
- 5) Appropriates \$60 million from the General Fund to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) on a one-time basis available for the 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 fiscal years to make grants to LEAs to assist those agencies to establish, maintain and expand teacher residency programs, with first priority given to LEAs or consortia of LEAs with programs that target chronic teacher shortage areas, including special education, math, science and bilingual teachers. Preference may also be given on the basis of their per pupil allocation of funds, as specified. Provides that these LEAs shall work with one or more teacher preparation institutions, and may work with other community partners or nonprofit organizations to develop and implement teacher residency programs of preparation and mentoring for prospective teachers who will be supported through teacher residency program funds and subsequently employed by the sponsoring LEA.
- 6) Requires that to be eligible to participate in a teacher residency program, a prospective participant must become enrolled in a teacher credentialing program in a university or college that satisfies either of the following conditions:
 - a) It has entered into a written agreement relating to that program with the LEA or consortia of LEAs that is the recipient of a grant.
 - b) It has been determined to meet professional preparation requirements, as specified, by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.
- 7) Requires a participant in a teacher residency program, under the supervision of an experienced mentor teacher, to complete not fewer than nine months of teaching a class or set of classes in a school chosen by the LEA that is the recipient of a grant.
- 8) Requires a participant to agree in writing to be placed, after successfully completing the initial year of preparation, as a teacher of record in a hard-to-staff school within the LEA.

- 9) Requires the placement to be for a period of at least four school years, as specified. Provides that once a participant is licensed, he or she shall be eligible to be hired as a teacher in a hard-to-staff, underserved area or in a difficult-to-fill subject area.
- 10) Provides that a participant who fails to complete the period of placement, or the first four school years of the placement if the period is more than four school years, is required to pay back the cost of the training on a pro rata basis, relative to the amount of time served in proportion to the total pledged.
- 11) Provides that if a participant is unable to complete an academic year of teaching, that academic year may still be counted toward the required four complete and consecutive academic years if any specified conditions occur, including whether the participant has completed at least one-half of the academic year, or the employer deems the participant to have fulfilled his or her contract requirements for the academic year for the purposes of salary increases, tenure, and retirement, or the participant was not able to teach due to the financial circumstances of the LEA, including decision to not reelect the employee for the next succeeding school year.
- 12) Provides that the grants provided shall be in an amount of \$20,000 per resident of the jurisdiction of the LEA, as matched by that LEA.
- 13) Provides that these funds may be applied to expenditures for master teachers' stipends, living stipends for residents, teacher residency program management, and costs of mentoring and induction following initial preparation.
- 14) Provides that the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) may make grants each fiscal year, commencing with the 2017-18 fiscal year until the 2019-20 fiscal year.
- 15) Prohibits an LEA or consortia of LEAs from receiving more than one award for an application in any fiscal year, unless sufficient funds remain after awarding all other qualified applicants.
- 16) Requires an LEA or consortia of LEAs to submit an application at a time, in a manner, and containing information prescribed by the SPI.
- 17) Requires the SPI to award grants on a competitive basis, with first priority given to applicants that target chronic teacher shortage areas, including special education, math, science and bilingual teachers. Preference may also be given to LEAs or consortia on the basis of their federal Title II per pupil allocation of funds, as specified.
- 18) Requires the SPI to conduct an evaluation of the program to determine its effectiveness in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers in chronic teacher shortage areas, including special education, math, science and bilingual teachers, and hard to staff schools.
- 19) Requires grant recipients to provide matching funds in an amount equal to 100 percent of the funds provided to the LEA which may be provided by community partners, institutions of higher education, or others.

EXISTING LAW authorizes the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to issue intern credentials as an alternate route to earning a teaching credential. This credential is valid for a period of two years and authorizes the holder to teach in a self-contained classroom while completing their teacher preparation course work. Approved intern programs are sponsored by colleges, universities, school districts, or county offices of education. To qualify, an individual must possess a bachelor's degree, satisfy the basic skills requirements, meet subject matter competence, and obtain character and identification clearance. University intern programs are cooperative teaching, counseling, school psychology, and administrative programs between a university and an employing school district that are administered by the university. District intern programs are for teachers only and are administered by employing school districts whose programs may or may not involve university course work. Completion of an intern program results in the issuance of a preliminary or clear credential. (Education Code 44325, et seq.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: This bill will provide school districts funding to create, maintain, or expand teacher residency programs. \$20,000 grants will fund new teachers earning a credential through a residency program. Residents will apprentice alongside a mentor in a classroom serving students for one academic year, while taking coursework from a partnering university, and earning a stipend. Residents will be required to commit to teach in the district for four years beyond their residency.

According to the author, "Data from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the Department of Education (DOE) illustrate that new California teaching credentials have remained constant at 11,500 since 2013-14, while the number of projected new hires exceeds 20,000. Enrollment in teacher preparation programs today is one-quarter of what it was fifteen years ago. To fill vacancies, districts acknowledge that they are hiring individuals who have not yet completed, and sometimes not even started, preparation programs for teaching. Last school year, alone, more than 4,000 teachers with inadequate preparation taught California's public school students. These numbers disproportionately impact special education students (1,700 waivers were issued in special education last school year), while the number of math and science teachers teaching on permits doubled over the last five years. Furthermore, on the heels of Proposition 58 (2016), projections indicate that California is not prepared to meet the expected increase in demands for bilingual education. As is customary in the medical profession, a promising approach to attracting and retaining high-quality, well-prepared teachers in the profession involves offering service scholarships, particularly residency programs. Residency programs pair teachers-in-training with mentor teachers to provide the former with career mentoring that will keep them in the profession. The California Teacher Corps program, outlined in AB 1217, will create a state-wide teacher residency program with the goals of placing residents in high-need classrooms, such as math, science, special education and bilingual education, and in hard-to-staff schools."

Differences between teacher residencies and internships. Teacher intern credentials authorize the credential holder to be the teacher of record in a classroom while completing and paying for his or her teacher preparation course work. To qualify, an individual must possess a bachelor's degree, satisfy the basic skills requirements, meet subject matter competence, and obtain character and identification clearance. Completion of an intern program results in the issuance of a preliminary or clear credential.

While teacher residency programs have many similarities, there are several noteworthy differences. Typically, there is up to a full-year of teaching alongside an expert mentor teacher rather than being the teacher of record. There is also added financial incentive for candidates under teacher residency programs. This bill allows the grants to be used for a resident's tuition at his or her teacher preparation program, unlike the existing intern model whereby the teacher is responsible.

Teacher shortage. School districts across the State of California are experiencing a serious shortage of qualified teachers. There are chronic shortages in the areas of math, science and special education. Further there is a shortage among bilingual teachers, and it is estimated that this shortage will grow with the growing popularity of language immersion and dual language immersion programs.

According to the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), the supply of new teachers in California is at a 12-year low. Enrollment in educator preparation programs has dropped by more than 70 percent over the last decade, and has fallen below the number of estimated hires by school districts around the state. It is estimated teacher hires for the 2015-16 school year increased by 25 percent from the previous year, while credentials issued to fully prepare new teachers increased by less than 1 percent from the previous year, and enrollment in teacher education programs increased by only about 2 percent.

Committee Amendments: Staff recommends the following amendments:

- 1) Conform this bill to a previous version and provide clarity by specifying that grant funds may be applied to expenditures for tuition assistance for residents.
- 2) To allow more flexibility, authorize a grant recipient 5 years to complete the 4 year teaching requirement.

Previous Legislation: SB 933 (Allen) from 2016, which was held on the Assembly Appropriations Suspense file, would have established the California Teacher Corps program to provide \$60 million in one-time Proposition 98 funding for matching grants to local school districts to create or expand teacher residency programs. Grant funding could have been used for master teacher stipends, stipends and tuition for residents, and costs of mentoring and induction.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Catholic Conference, Inc.
EdVoice
Public Advocates
The Education Trust – West

Opposition

None on file

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